

Message Text

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14

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 DOTE-00 RSR-01 /109 W
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P R 281007 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6387

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 1744

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, ETRAN, OVIP, OCON, FI

SUBJECT: FINNISH DOCK STRIKE ENDS

REF: (A) HELSINKI 1396 NOTAL; (B) HELSINKI 1655; AND
(C) HELSINKI 1705 NOTAL

BEGIN SUMMARY. IN BIZARRE END TO SPRING BARGAINING
TRAVAILS FINNISH LONGSHOREMEN REJECTED CONTRACT
SETTLEMENT PROPOSAL FOR THIRD TIME AND THEN RETURNED
TO WORK YESTERDAY MORNING AFTER MINOR ADJUSTMENTS
WERE MADE IN SIZE AND TIMING OF PAY INCREASES.
SETTLEMENT ENDS SPATE OF STRIKES WHICH HAS PLAGUED
FINLAND SINCE APRIL AND MEANS THAT NO LABOR CONFLICTS
ARE LIKELY TO MAR FIRST PHASE OF CSCE CONFERENCE NEXT
WEEK. END SUMMARY.

1. FINNISH LONGSHOREMEN ENDED THEIR NEARLY THREE- WEEK
STRIKE ON JUNE 27 AFTER A SCENARIO ONE IS TEMPTED
TO SAY " COULD ONLY HAPPEN HERE". WITH ONLY ONE THIRD
VOTE NECESSARY FOR APPROVAL DOCKWORKERS TURNED DOWN
A PROPOSED CONTRACT FOR THE THIRD TIME IN AS MANY
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MONTHS. THIS TIME VOTE WAS 71 TO 29 PERCENT IN FAVOR OF REJECTION. NEGOTIATIONS WERE HURRIEDLY RESUMED AFTER RESULT WAS ANNOUNCED TUESDAY AFTERNOON. AFTER SOME JUGGLING OF SIZE AND TIMING OF PAY BOOSTS TO BE MADE DURING TWO- YEAR CONTRACT-- WHICH RESULTED IN SLIGHT NET GAIN FOR WORKERS-- TRANSPORT WORKERS (AKT) EXECUTIVE BOARD DECIDED THE SAME EVENING TO ACCEPT THE REVISED SETTLEMENT WITHOUT RESORT TO FOURTH MEMBERSHIP VOTE. AKT BOARD' S DECISION WAS ON PARTY LINE BASIS, WITH NINE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN FAVOR AND TWO COMMUNISTS OPPOSED. WORK RESUMED IN MOST HARBORS WEDNESDAY JUNE 27 AND PORTS OF LOVIISA AND KEMI FOLLOWED SUIT TODAY, AND TURKU IS EXPECTED TO RESUME OPERATIONS JULY 2.

2. ALTHOUGH ECONOMIC INTERESTS WERE IMPORTANT IN DISPUTE, LONGSHOREMEN' S STRIKE CAN BE SEEN AS PART OF POLITICAL POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN AKT. UNION IS ONE OF COMMUNISTS' PRINCIPAL TARGETS AND BY USING LONGSHOREMEN, AMONG WHOM THEY ARE PROPORTIONALLY STRONGER THAN IN UNION AS A WHOLE, THEY HOPE TO BUILD RECORD AND POWER BASE FROM WHICH TO CHALLENGE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP. THE LONGSHOREMEN' S DOCILE RETURN TO WORK-- DESPITE LARGE NEGATIVE VOTES ON CONTRACTS-- INDICATES THAT COMMUNISTS' HARDCORE SUPPORT IS RELATIVELY SMALL AND THAT ANY BID TO OVERTURN THE AKT LEADERSHIP IS UNLIKELY TO SUCCEED.

3. END OF STRIKE RETURNS FINLAND TO LABOR PEACE FOR THE PRESENT. ALTHOUGH COMMUNISTS HAVE PREDICTED FURTHER LABOR TROUBLES IN THE AUTUMN, THERE IS LITTLE PROSPECT-- IN CONTRAST TO THE LAST DAYS OF THE MPT-- THAT STRIKES WILL EMBARRASS THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT AS IT PLAYS HOST TO THE MINISTERIAL OPENING OF THE CSCE NEXT WEEK.
KREHBIEL

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